

THE FIRST ITALO-SANUSI WAR

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mon symbol which stood for their common interests. Faced with amorphous, but seemingly ineradicable, opposition from the Bedouin the Italians more and more directed their hostility to the Sanusiya Order as a tangible head to the resistance which could be destroyed. Failing to crush opposition they were forced to come to terms with it, but they could not come to terms with a tribal system—only with an organization and through a person, the Head of the Order, who could speak for that organization and for the tribes which it represented. Both in fighting the tribes and in trying to come to terms with them, the Italians thus threw the Sanusiya organization into political relief, and the *tariqa*, the religious Order, began to speak of itself as a *hakuma*, government. The peace negotiations, therefore, centred round a contradiction. The Italians attempted to exact recognition of sovereignty and this implied recognition of the right of the Head of the Order to surrender sovereignty, which he could do only if he were in a position analogous to that of the Head of the Italian State, a status the Italians would not concede. Nevertheless they were compelled, in order to establish relations with the tribes, to grant the Head of the Order the title of Amir, and implicitly to recognize him as not only the Shaikh of a religious Order, but the Head of a political organization. As will be seen, the dilemma led to much equivocation and finally to a second Italo-Sanusi war. In this second war the Sanusiya was entirely destroyed as an organization, political, economic, and religious. It persisted nevertheless as a sentiment, and the Head of the Order in exile in Egypt still retained the allegiance of the Bedouin who saw in his freedom the hope of their own.

When the last European war broke out and Cyrenaica became a battlefield of first importance it was in the interests of each side to ensure that the local population would be favourable to it. The Italians, having destroyed the Order, the one organization through which they might have made effective propaganda among the Bedouin, were confronted in the country with an unimpressible mass of sullen resentment which could in no way be influenced to their advantage. The British, on the other hand, who sought to rouse the Bedouin to renewed rebellion, at any rate up to the point at which they gave what assistance to British arms they were capable of, had a ready

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Cyrenaica itself; while if the Italians were too greedy, they could break off negotiations and limit their further participation in the Sanusi war to defensive action along the Egyptian frontier, leaving the Italians to validate their claim to sovereignty by force of arms. Italian diplomatic strength lay in the agreement by which England had bound herself that she would not conclude a separate peace with the Sanusi. They knew that the British were eager—Col Talbot was always trying to expedite the discussions—to end their military commitments in this theatre and they were, therefore, able to bring pressure on Sayyid Idris through them. The Sayyid's strength lay in his weakness. To obtain an effective truce, the Allies would have to back him personally, and they could only do this by making concessions.

Dummy, Sayyid Idris's absent partner in this game, was his cousin Sayyid Ahmad. Till recently Sayyid Ahmad had been undisputed leader of the Sanusi, and were he to appear on the scene again, the Bedouin would probably follow him. As neither he nor the Italians were prepared to negotiate with one another, and as the British also had no wish to negotiate with him, his reappearance would mean renewal of the fighting. The only way in which it could be prevented was by making a success of the discussions with Sayyid Idris. The Allied Mission felt the presence of this uncompromising man at the conference of al-Zuwaitina, although he was far away in the oasis of al-Kharja.

II

Peace was so clearly in the interests of all that the temporary breakdown of the talks at al-Zuwaitina did not lead to further hostilities on either side, and was regarded by both as an interlude between two phases in the negotiations. The talks were resumed in the Marmarica in January 1917. The Allied Mission lived at Tubruq and the Sayyid at 'Akrama, about 40 km. distant. The Idrisis of Luxor, father and son, were again present and, as before, flitted between the two parties. The Italians were represented by Col. De Vita and Com. Pintor. Sayyid Ahmad was at Siwa.

The talks began well and by 27 March the exchange of Italian and Sanusi prisoners was at last effected. In return for the

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*175 Sayyid's goodwill in this matter the Allies conceded in principle
*648 the reopening of the markets to the famished Bedouin. The
*795 programme of al-Zuwaitina then began to repeat itself. The
• 728 Italians pressed for the acceptance of terms substantially the
same as those they put forward the year before and which
became known as *modus vivendi* No. 1. They were unacceptable
to the Sayyid, whose position had not deteriorated to any extent
in the interval, and he replied with what became known as
modus vivendi No. 2, in which he asked the Italians to make all
the concessions he desired while deferring for future discussion
the points in which they were chiefly interested. On the basis
of the Sayyid's counter-proposals the Italians produced a *modus
vivendi* No. 3 which gave the Sayyid almost all he had asked
for, being in fact No. 2 with slight alterations and additions.
To this the Sayyid replied with a *modus vivendi* No. 4, which
altered or omitted several of the clauses in No. 3. Col. Talbot
now felt that the ball had been patted backwards and forwards
long enough, that the Sayyid's last effort was unnecessary, as
the terms of the latest Italian proposals were practically the
same as those put forward by the Sayyid himself, and that there-
fore No. 3 should be accepted as it stood without modifications.
The Sayyid accepted it on the promise that when he did so the
markets would forthwith be reopened.

At this point the Italian delegates, who were only empowered
to negotiate *ad referendum*, declared, to Col. Talbot's con-
sternation, that the Sayyid's acceptance of *modus vivendi* No. 3
was inadequate and that he must also accept No. 1 'on general
lines'. It could hardly have seemed otherwise to the Sayyid
than that the Italians were increasing their demands. How-
ever, he once again took Col. Talbot's advice and agreed to
accept No. 1 'on general lines' on the Colonel's assurance that
an acceptance of so general a nature would not fetter his future
action; although the Italian interpretation of 'on general lines'
was that it referred to the time and manner of implementation
and not to the substance of the agreement. In the end, there-
fore, the Sayyid accepted No. 3 for immediate application and
No. 1 on the understanding that it was to be put into force
later, gradually, and subject to agreement between the parties.
In reality he committed himself to very little. He had already
consented to sign the terms placed before him by the British.

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He signed the agreements with both Powers, with England on 14 April and with Italy on 17 April; and Col. Talbot returned to Cairo to report to Sir Reginald Wingate.

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The main clauses in *modus vivendi* No. 3, for immediate application, were: hostilities were to cease at once; social intercourse and commerce were to be free between the parts of Cyrenaica occupied by Italy and those held by the Sanusiya; each party was to be responsible for security in its own territory; and neither was to create new military posts or to encroach on the territory of the other. The population was to be disarmed at a later date, it being impossible to effect this at the time; and fomentors of disorder were to be removed. Further clauses stipulated that the lodges of the Sanusiya Order occupied by the Italians were to be restored to the Order, though the Italians were to remain in those being used by them for military purposes till peace was established; that the properties of the Order were to be free from taxation as in Turkish times; that the Italians were to pay salaries to Shaikhs of the lodges, nominated by the Sayyid with Italian approval, within their zone; and that in the interior Shaikhs of lodges were to act as intermediaries should it be necessary for the Italians to have dealings with the tribes. Muslim personal law and koranic teaching were safeguarded in the courts and schools in the area under Italian control.

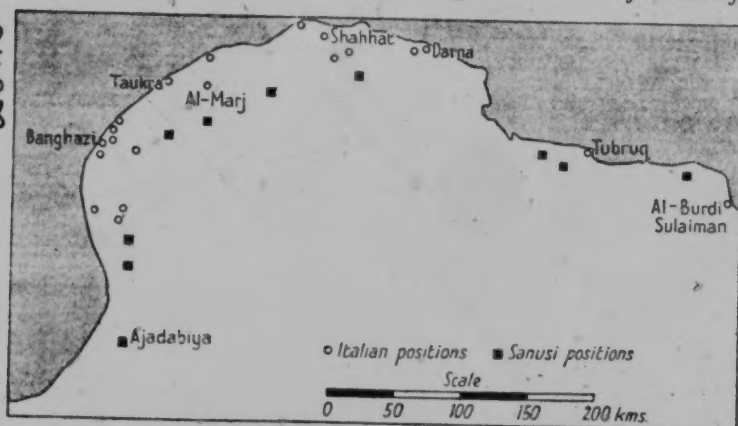
Modus vivendi No. 1, accepted by the parties in principle and for future application, differed from No. 3 in three particulars: the Sanusi armed camps were to be broken up and their garrisons dispersed; the tribes were to be progressively disarmed within a year; and the Italian Government was to nominate, on the Sayyid's presentation of three names, Shaikhs of lodges in their zone.

By the British-Sanusi (Talbot-Idris) agreement, to the general terms of which Sayyid Idris had assented at al-Zuwaitina, all British, Allied, and Egyptian subjects were to be handed over; all Turkish and other enemy officers and agents were to be either handed over or sent out of Africa; and no armed Sanusi were to remain in Egyptian territory, or armed gatherings to be held near the frontier. Al-Sallum was to be opened for trade, but Alexandria-al-Sallum was to be the only route by which goods, in limited quantities, might enter Cyrenaica from Egypt, and

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*175 only on condition that nothing reached Turco-German hands.
*648 No Sanusiya lodges were to exist on Egyptian soil (they had
*795 already been razed to the ground in the Marmarica), though
728 alms might be collected from Egyptian adherents to the Order.
Sayyid Idris's property in Egypt was to be respected. Jaghubub
oasis, though in Egypt, was to be administered by the Sayyid.
The agreement signed at 'Akrama settled affairs between the
Sanusi and the British. The British got the military security



The disposition of Italian and Sanusi positions in October 1916.

*175 they needed. The terms were very favourable to the Sanusi.
*648 The *status quo* was preserved, the Italians being left in control
*795 of those parts of Cyrenaica in which they had established them-
728 selves—the coastal towns and a few inland posts—and the
[793] Sanusiya Order retaining the rest of the country. The Sayyid
had saved the organization of the Order his grandfather had
founded in Cyrenaica, and though he was not formally recog-
nized as more than the Head of a religious Order he was, in
fact and of necessity, treated as though he were, as indeed he
was, also the secular ruler of an independent people. The
accords were signed without consultation with the Turks and
without their consent, so whereas Sayyid Ahmad had fought
the Italians and British as representative of the Sultan, his
cousin made peace with them in his own right.

The least satisfied party were the Italians. They had em-
barked on a colonial war and had not been successful in waging

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it. The Sanusi attack on the British was a godsend to them, since it not only diverted Sanusi forces but brought to their side a powerful ally who, they hoped, would win their colonial war for them or, at any rate, exact from the enemy the fruits of a successful campaign. All they got from the truce was what their arms were able to maintain. Nothing in the agreements was said about their claim to sovereignty, round which there had been so much discussion during the negotiations. Some Fascist writers later blamed the Government of the day for signing 'the *modus vivendi* of Acroma', but it could not have wrung more from the Sayyid than verbal concessions, because it had not the military power to exact more. Nevertheless, the best Italian commentators have pointed out that the accord at least gave peace to Cyrenaica in the troubled years of European war and was the basis of those later accords which were to preserve it during the dangerous years of civil discord in Italy. It also gave the Italians the opportunity to spread their influence among the tribes through propaganda, subsidies, and trade. More immediate fruits were the rounding up of the Turkish and pro-Turkish elements and the widening of the breach between the Arabs of Tripolitania and those of Cyrenaica.

In the end, however, there cannot be two competing political sovereignties in the same country. The accord was a truce of convenience, on the basis, as Mondaini says,¹ of the *uti possidetis*, entered into by Italians and Sanusi because both were exhausted by the ordeal. It was 'the product of a situation particularly delicate for both',² and a situation which could not last.

III

The *modus vivendi* of Acroma was, as the title implies, a truce rather than a treaty. It brought military action to a close, but left political questions for future settlement. The accord embodied a fundamental ambiguity: Italy did not renounce her claim to sovereignty and the Sanusiya did not concede it to her or renounce, either explicitly or implicitly, 'the dominion which in plain fact it exercised, not only over the oases of the interior, but even over the Cyrenaican plateau

¹ Op. cit., p. 386.

² Serra, op. cit., pp. 103-4.

*175 itself, excepting the parts of it occupied by the Italians'.¹ In
*648 some respects the Sayyid found himself in much the same posi-
*795 tion *vis-à-vis* the Italian Government as previous heads of
• 728 the Order had been *vis-à-vis* the Turkish Government. The
authority of the Italians was limited, as that of the Turks had
been, to the coastal towns and a few inland posts, and the rest
of the country came under Sanusiya administration. The Order
recognized their *de facto* control of the towns and they recog-
nized the *de facto* rule of the Order in the country.

It must again be emphasized that the Sayyid signed a truce
with the British and Italians without consulting the Turks and
that he signed a truce with the British in his own right and not
as under Italian suzerainty. Furthermore, he was defending
the western frontier of Cyrenaica on behalf of the Allies, and
with his own army, against possible incursions from Tripoli-
tania. To prevent Ramadan al-Shtaiwi and his supporters
making a drive into Cyrenaica, Sayyid Idris recruited a new
army from the Bedouin and established a *khatt al-nar*, a line of
fire, as the Arabs called it, across the Sirtica. To aid him to
maintain these frontier defences the Italians had provided him
with 2,000 rifles, a battery of mountain artillery, and funds.
They deeply resented that later the force armed by themselves,
the '*armati idrisiti*', was turned against Italy. In these cir-
cumstances it was clear that the Accord of 'Akrama would have
to be supplemented by further agreements.

*175 Domestic confusion made the task of the local Italian com-
*648 manders and administrative officers very difficult. Those who
had hoped that when the European war ended they would be
able to give greater attention to their Libyan colonies had under-
estimated the moral deterioration in Italy, where disunity in
the years of war was nothing to the chaos of the years which
followed it. An attempt to renew the colonial war in Libya
during these troubled years of 1918-22 would have created such
an outcry in Italy that none of the post-war Administrations,
which were always up to their ears in difficulties, could have
faced the extra embarrassment. Had the Italians been able to
act with promptness and decision in Libya when the war in
Europe ended they would probably have met with little resis-
tance. They had at hand men and material in plenty to

¹ Mondaini, op. cit., p. 388.

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reconquer Tripolitania and Cyrenaica, but they lacked the will to action. Instead, they vacillated between threats of force on the one side and appeasements and diplomatic surrenders on the other. 175*
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Considerable reinforcements were indeed sent to Tripolitania, but when there were assembled there 80,000 men ready for the reconquest of the country, the Government signed with the Arab leaders the humiliating pourparlers of Kallet al-Zaituna in the spring of 1919. The agreement was supplemented on 1 June 1919 by a constitution giving to the Arabs a parliament, Italian citizenship, exemption from taxation, &c. The Arabs were more than ever convinced of Italian impotence. In theory, an Arab republic, the *Jumhuriya al-Trabulsiya*, founded in the previous year under Turco-Germanic influence, now ruled the country through its Committee of Reform at Misurata under the leadership of Ramadan al-Shtaiwi. In fact, there was little order of any kind. Quarrels broke out between tribes and between tribal leaders, anyone powerful enough set himself up as overlord of his district, the Arabs raided the Berbers, outside the narrow coastal region held by their troops Italian officials were little more than consular agents, and when Italian forces took part in Arab disputes they did so rather as mercenaries or allies than as rulers of a colony responsible for peace and security in it. Meanwhile the Committee of Reform made preparations to achieve the complete independence of Tripolitania from Italian rule by securing agreement in principle to a Tripolitanian Amirate from an assembly of notables at Ghariyan in November 1921. The deputation which carried this resolution to Rome, though it received no official encouragement, found much support among Communists, Socialists, and trouble-makers of all kinds. Its leader, Muhammad Khalid al-Qarqani, went on to attend the Muslim Revolutionary Congress in Moscow. Such a state of affairs could not last, and in the midst of it Count Giuseppe Volpi was nominated Governor of Tripolitania. He was an energetic man prepared to act on his own responsibility, and by March 1922 he had recaptured Misurata and the whole coastal region between that town and Tunisia and had commenced operations in the Sirtica. (728) •

During this period there was peace in Cyrenaica, the fruit of the Accord of 'Akrama. At first the Italians did no more than 175*
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*175 as well as Italy, had been forced to compromise. Critics of the
*648 Fascist period were later to complain that the pact was a blow
631 to Italian prestige in that it virtually recognized 'the existence
*795 of two distinct Governments',¹ and Macaluso goes so far as to
793 say that the making of the Sayyid into an Amir 'was the
ratification of the undisputed sovereignty of the Sanusiya in
Cyrenaica'.² Even those who defended the agreement had to
admit that the Order was not being treated as a purely religious
body, but as a politico-religious fraternity and that there was,
therefore, doubt about what its relations with the Italian
Government were supposed to be. 'Amir' to the Italians meant
Honorary Prince but it had a very different sense to the Arabs.
It was, moreover, uncertain whether a seat at Ajadabiya implied
that the warlike Magharba tribe of the *barqa* and the Sirtica
came within the Sayyid's political orbit or not. On the whole
one can say that the Sayyid, or rather the Amir, as we can now
call him, bargained autonomy of the oases and the hinterland
for his armed camps and administrative posts on the plateau.
As he did not, in fact, disband these he may be said to have had
the better of the bargain. After the Accord of al-Rajma was
signed the Amir visited Rome.

The accord was supplemented by a further agreement known
as *Sistemazione definitiva delle zaui* of 16 August 1921 by which
nomination, suspension, and transfer of Shaikhs of Sanusiya
lodges were to be in the hands of the Amir, but he had to give
notice of these acts to the Government, and he promised to
remove Shaikhs who embittered relations between the Govern-
ment and the people. The Government undertook to pay the
[434] Shaikhs of lodges (in two categories of L. 900 and L. 600 a
[728] month), to hand back to the Order all lodges in its occupation,
except those being used as forts, and to pay the sum of L. 500,000
as indemnity for lodges destroyed during the war.³

IV

The Italians pretended afterwards that 'Umar al-Kakhiya, who closely followed political events in Italy, had in bad faith, believing that the Socialists were in the ascendant' and that

¹ Agostino Gaibi, op. cit., p. 463.

² Macaluso, op. cit., p. 102.

³ *L'Occupazione di Cufra*, 1931, pp. 62-3. On 16 August 1921 the Lira was 84 to the Pound Sterling.

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*175 captured, against 2 Italian officers, 5 airmen, and 61 native
*648 troops dead. The 'Abid and Bara'asa, the two tribes which
*795 from the beginning were the most tenacious supporters of Sidi
[727] 'Umar, were the most severely hit. The 1927 summer campaign
left the Patriots dispersed and they had now clearly lost the
initiative in the more open country. They still held out, how-
ever, in the more broken and wooded area of the *jashsha* in the
neighbourhood of Bir Qandula, Shnaishan, and the Wadi
Mahajja, and to the south of Jardis al-'Abid, where they could
more easily escape detection from the air and disperse before
superior forces. Here Sidi 'Umar reorganized his guerrilla bands.
His difficulties and casualties were becoming formidable. Indeed,
in the summer of 1928 Teruzzi could speak with some justice of
the war on the plateau as large-scale police action. In evidence
of his success in the work of pacification he cites that between
May 1927 and February 1929 he recovered 3,755 rifles from the
Bedouin. Fighting still went on, it is true, and raids against the
submitted sections, particularly against the Hasa tribe, even
became fiercer, but the area of guerrilla activities was more
restricted. On the last day of March 1928 the Patriots suffered
[727] an unusually severe defeat in the southern steppe country, in
which they lost 200 dead, 70 prisoners, and 1,500 camels and
20 horses killed. Sidi 'Umar was forced, for the first time, to
make contact with the Italians and treat with them for a truce.

● [728] The development of operations in Tripolitania had pointed
*175 to greater co-ordination between the forces attempting to crush
*648 Arab resistance in that country and those attempting the same
*795 in Cyrenaica, so at the end of 1928 the two colonies were placed
728 under the single direction of Badoglio, and early in 1929 Teruzzi
was replaced in Cyrenaica by Siciliani with the rank of Vice-
Governor. Badoglio marked his appointment with a flamboyant
proclamation offering the Arabs the choice between uncondi-
tional surrender and extermination. Its tone defeated its end,
if peace was its end, though Italian writers assume that it
influenced Sidi 'Umar in making his approach to the Italians in
June 1929, together with the noted guerrilla leader Sidi Fadil
bu 'Umar and Sayyid al-Hasan al-Rida, a boy of the Sanusi
family who accompanied the guerrilla forces on the plateau. A
truce was agreed to by both sides and continued for five months
while negotiations for peace dragged on. The Arab and Italian

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accounts of these negotiations are very different and in many particulars contradictory. Graziani's account is certainly tendentious and I see no reason to doubt the Arab statements that Sidi 'Umar would not sign terms unless they were witnessed by observers from Egypt and Tunisia and agreed to by Sayyid Idris. As he was thus claiming to be the representative of the Head of a sovereign State the Italians would not agree to these conditions and discussions broke down. The Italians, however, prevailed on the boy al-Hasan to sign an agreement in their favour, and greatly to his own personal advantage, at Banghazi. This agreement was at once repudiated by Sidi 'Umar, and Sayyid al-Hasan deserted him, followed by most of the Bara'asa-Darsa band, which Sidi 'Umar's followers nicknamed 'The Army of Flour', chiding them for selling themselves for rations. Fighting broke out again in November and on 8 January 1930 Sayyid al-Hasan's followers, who had been kept under supervision, resisted the Italian attempt to disarm them and 80 of them were killed while another 100, including the Sayyid, surrendered. Ten days later Sidi 'Umar's own force was beaten on the Wadi Mahajja, he himself being wounded and barely escaping with his life. From February 1929 the Patriots had lost another 800 men killed, 2,000 camels, and a vast number of sheep and goats. About 2,000 Bedouin had fled with their animals and goods into Egypt. Against these losses the Italians had lost only 6 officers, 6 other nationals, and 102 native troops.

VI

It is here necessary to leave Sidi 'Umar fighting his desperate guerrilla fight on the plateau to note developments in the Sirtica, which Teruzzi had decided to clean up in 1927. After their drive on Ajadabiya at the commencement of hostilities in 1923 the Italians had been content to sit in the village, leaving the Bedouin in control of the country around it. But operations in Tripolitania had drawn Italian forces slowly farther away from their coastal bases towards the south and east and were now being held up because the Tripolitanian elements which still resisted were able to retire into the Sirtica and its hinterland, where they were difficult to contact and could rely on recruits and supplies from their Cyrenaican kinsmen. The

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The *modus vivendi* of 'Akrama of 1917 declared that the Sanusiya lodges occupied by the Italians were to be restored to the Order, together with their properties, which would be exempt from taxation. The Italians were also to pay salaries to the Shaikhs of the lodges. On 29 July 1919 the Governor of Cyrenaica, Giacomo De Martino, issued a proclamation in which he spoke of the '*Venerabile Confraternità dei Senussi*' from which the Government sought co-operation for the moral and economic advancement of the country and for the maintenance of security, and of the '*Venerabili Zawie e i loro Capi*' to whom were confirmed their traditional privileges and full freedom to exercise their beneficial functions.¹ The Accord of al-Rajma, which replaced the truce of 'Akrama in 1920, re-affirmed the right of the Order to its endowments. On 16 August 1921 a further agreement, the *Sistemazione definitiva delle zawie*, again reaffirmed it, and the Italians promised to pay an indemnity for lodges destroyed by their action during the war and again undertook to pay the salaries of the Shaikhs of the lodges.

In 1919 the Government of Cyrenaica, in order to put into execution Article 5 of the *modus vivendi* of 'Akrama, had nominated a Mixed Commission presided over by the Head of the Land Registry at Banghazi, Judge Colucci. Sayyid Idris appointed a representative on this Commission, and the Shaikhs of the lodges were co-opted when the lands of their lodges were being registered. The terms of reference limited the duties of this Commission to registration of lands indicated by the Shaikhs as belonging to their lodges, examination of documents relating to these properties, and interrogation of tribal Shaikhs representing those sections which had made the endowments. Moreover, the Commission was to register the immobile properties of only fourteen of the Sanusiya lodges, those which the *modus vivendi* recognized as being in the Italian area of occupation.

In 1922 the new Fascist Government at Rome decided to crush the Sanusiya Order once and for all and to seize its lands and colonize them with its own nationals. Gen. Bongiovanni's declaration of 1 May 1933, rendering invalid all accords and conventions entered into with the Sanusiya, revoked by implication the guarantees of inviolability of the estates of the Order. Even

¹ *Bollettino Ufficiale*, Bengasi, Jan.-Feb. 1919.

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so, to avoid offence to Muslim opinion outside the Order, he was careful to announce in the same proclamation that the Sanusiya Order would be free to function as an Islamic fraternity.¹

When Bedouin resistance had been overcome, except for its final guerrilla spasms in the more inaccessible parts of the plateau, the Italians no longer hesitated to grasp the prize they had aimed at for so long. By the Royal Decree of 22 December 1930 the articles of the various pacts between the Italians and the Sanusi which recognized the property rights of the Order were formally revoked and the closure of its lodges and sequestration of their goods were ordered. The Head of the Cyrenaican Land Registry was instructed to register without delay the properties of the Order in the name of the Colony. This Royal Decree set out to destroy the economic foundations of the Order as completely as military operations had destroyed its political foundations.

In execution of the decree Judge Valenzi was instructed in 1931 to complete the registration of as many of the Sanusiya lodges as political circumstances permitted and to inscribe their properties as patrimony of the colony. A technical survey and, therefore, final registration, were completed for only eighteen of the lodges. The disturbed state of the country, in which guerrilla bands were still operating, forced the Government to be content with compiling inventories of the properties of the remaining lodges from depositions made by tribal Shaikhs in concentration camps. It was intended to make a technical survey of these when circumstances allowed, but the work does not seem to have been done. During Italo Balbo's Governorship of Libya, from 1 January 1934, the Italians took what they wanted of the Sanusiya estates for their colonists and for other purposes, and the Shaikhs of the lodges on their return from captivity, or anyone else who wished to do so, cultivated on what was not immediately required by the State, though all the land belonged to the Colony and would eventually have been taken over by the Government without compensation whenever it suited its purpose.

The confiscated lands of the Order were given, when suitably placed, to Italian colonists under the *Ente* scheme of demo-

¹ Op. cit., pp. 7-8; also the Governor's speech on 6 Mar. 1923 at the opening of the spring session of the Cyrenaican Parliament.

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graphic settlement. Some of the richest arable lands in Cyrenaica, forming part of the endowments of the plateau lodges, were used for this purpose, and the lands of a number of other lodges came within the area marked out for future metropolitan colonization. The lands of yet other lodges lying outside this area were earmarked for Arab agricultural settlement schemes. The only Sanusiya lands which were not to be colonized were those in the less-favoured parts of the country. The date-palms and gardens of the Order in the oases were also confiscated.

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As soon as the Italians had been powerful enough to seize the endowments of the Order they had seized them. Their action can only be called theft. It was a violation of the Shari'a law, repeatedly proclaimed inviolable by the Italians, and of the constitution they drew up for Cyrenaica in 1919. Their plea that the Order had opposed them in both political and military fields and had fomented rebellion in the Colony would have carried more weight if they had not seized the lands for their own nationals, for they could quite as effectively have broken the Order by using its revenues for general religious and charitable purposes. Some Italians were, indeed, troubled about such barefaced robbery, but their lawyers were able to fall back on the specious argument, so often used before to excuse similar expropriations, that the State has unlimited powers and must use them for its own safety and the welfare of the community regardless of the traditional rights of individuals and associations, and of God.

II

The elimination of the Sanusiya deprived the Bedouin of the leaders they had learned to follow but it did not make them any more favourably disposed towards the Italians. The efforts of the Administration to overcome this dull hostile turning away from their conquerors, to their acceptance of them only in resignation to the will of God, had only from 1932 to 1940 to become effective, and it was so little successful that I do not consider a detailed account of Italian native policy and measures to be required. I shall endeavour nevertheless to indicate briefly in the present section the general lines of their policy from 1911 to the entry of Italy into the last war and to illustrate its development by describing briefly in the following sections

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common effort to reconstruct the life of the country. The first object of the Government was now to increase the population, not to destroy it, for the country could never be prosperous in its present depopulated state. At least 20,000 refugees had taken refuge during the war in Egypt and elsewhere and they could not be expected to return unless a more conciliatory policy were pursued.

Selected Arab officials were attached to the Italian Consulates in Egypt to do propaganda among the refugees, and those who returned were given food, clothing, and beasts. This policy met with some success. In Egypt, where most of the refugees lived, the Bedouin were faced with the choice between becoming wage-earners or leading a gipsy life on the edge of the cultivations. The temptation to return to their country, where they were used to a life of freedom and plenty, was too great for many of them, in spite of Italian occupation. It was, as they say, *yakhtar akhaf al-dararain*, the choice of the lighter of two evils. Between 5,000 and 10,000 must have returned by the middle of 1940. Besides a general amnesty to induce the refugees to return, pardon was granted to almost all political prisoners, and by 1939 only a very few remained in jail or enforced exile. Instructions were given for this fact to be made widely known to neutralize anti-Italian propaganda in Arab countries.

It was possible to adopt a milder policy because the Bedouin had been disarmed and were unable to cause further trouble. It had long been recognized that while they possessed arms they would use them against the Italians if given an opportunity. As early as August 1912, in the very premature *Norme Sommarie* for Political Officers, it was stressed that the Bedouin regard rifles as essential as horses and that no amount of persuasion would make them part with either, especially as 'there is not an Arab in the country who, in asking himself why we have come, does not reply to himself and to others, "To take our lands, our beasts, our women"'. Because of the strong feelings of the Bedouin on an issue which touched their manhood no very determined attempt was made to disarm those tribal sections which submitted to the Italians till the second Italo-Sanusi war was well advanced, and it was not till Graziani was made Vice-Governor in March 1930 that total disarmament of the civilian population was aimed at.